Department of Planning and Development

dpd

Client Assistance Memo

CAM

318

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Building Code Presubmittal/ Code Interpretation Conferences

March 2002

A Building Code presubmittal/code interpretation conference is a meeting between one or more members of a project design team and DPD professional staff to discuss code alternates, modifications, or interpretations relating to a specific project. This Client Assistance Memo (CAM) is intended to give the architect, engineer, or other development professional an understanding of the requirements for and significance of a pre-submittal/code interpretation conference.

NOTE: A **voluntary** presubmittal/code interpretation conference should not be confused with a **required** pre-submittal conference on emergency life safety systems, which is required for high-rise buildings or those with atriums. For information on required pre-submittal conferences, see CAM 313. To arrange for a presubmittal conference, call (206) 684-8850. For existing buildings that may undergo substantial alteration, see CAM 314.

These CAMs may be obtained on DPD's website at **www.seattle.gov/dpd/publications** or from our Public Resource Center (PRC), located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave.

Getting Answers to Code Questions

DPD provides a technical back-up service to answer explicit Building Code and Energy/Mechanical Code questions. Technical back-up plans examiners are available to walk-in customers on a first-come, first-served basis during normal working hours. Technical back-up is also available by phone from 1 p.m.-4:15 p.m. daily. For Building Code, call (206) 684-4630; for Energy/Mechanical Code, call (206) 684-7846.

Technical back-up service is intended to provide a quick interpretation on specific code issues. If you wish to have a documented code interpretation on an issue, a formal pre-submittal conference is required.

Preparing For a Meeting

It is generally advisable to schedule a presubmittal/ code interpretation conference well in advance of permit application so that your project designs can reflect agreed upon elements. **Prior to scheduling a conference, applicants are expected to have done their own code research so as to present their specific issues within the context of the code. In presenting the issues, the applicant should state why a problem exists, the proposal, and rationale to resolve it.** The attached code alternate and code interpretation forms provide the format for following this process and must be filled out and sent in to DPD prior to your meeting.

Some examples of problems discussed at the presubmittal conference include exiting issues, barrier free code conflicts, operational issues, cost impacts, issues related to historic landmarks, etc. In certain cases when it is deemed efficient or expedient, a multidisciplinary presubmittal conference may be necessary. These meetings may include one or more of the following: building plans reviewers, mechanical/ energy reviewers, the Fire Department plan reviewers, and the full design team.

Plans/Designs to be Discussed

If you are a designer, you are expected to bring plans or schematic drawings to the conference that are prepared with a level of detail sufficient to clearly illustrate the code issues to be discussed. The more precise the material, the more definitive the code interpretation made at the conference can be.

Required Documentation

As the applicant, it is your responsibility to document decisions made at the presubmittal conference.

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Meeting minutes and any specific code interpretations including justifications resulting from the conference must be submitted in writing and approved by the responsible senior staff member in order to have standing during the plan review. Upon receipt of the minutes, the responsible DPD staff member will either approve them or take responsibility for resolving any areas of disagreement so the record will be clear.

DPD is committed to making decisions as soon as possible. Clarity of information and clear presentation of issues will expedite the decision making process. A copy of presubmittal decisions should be submitted with the permit applications.

Conference Limitations

Conclusions reached at the presubmittal/code interpretation conference are based on information provided by the applicant. A general concept approval will not substitute for the findings in the detailed permit plan review on a specific issue unless the specific issue has been documented as a code alternate or interpretation.

If all related facts are not presented, or if changes or additions are made to the plans, DPD is not bound by presubmittal findings. Code sections researched after the presubmittal meetings may alter presubmittal decisions. If the Building Code is amended between the time of preliminary agreements and building permit application, any agreements based on the previous code provisions may not be valid.

Presubmittal meetings are designed for the department to respond to specific applicant-posed issues and concerns. Applicants should not expect DPD staff to suggest design approaches or alternatives.

DPD will make every effort to stand behind well-documented preliminary code decisions reached at a presubmittal conference.

Fees

Fees are due at the time you apply. They are charged in accordance with the fee schedule, established annually by the City in the Permit Fee Ordinance, available on DPD's online "Fees" page at **www.seattle.gov/dpd/about**. Inquiries about fees may also be made by calling the Public Resource Center at (206) 684-8467.

Purchasing Codes

The Seattle Building Code is comprised of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) with Seattle Amendments. Copies of the UBC and amendments are available for purchase from the DPD Public Resource Center, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave. in downtown Seattle, (206) 684-8467.

Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of DPD **Client Assistance Memos (CAMs), Director's Rules**, and the **Seattle Municipal Code** are available on the "Publications" and "Codes" pages of our website at **www.seattle.gov/dpd.** Paper copies of these documents, as well as additional regulations, are available from our Public Resource Center, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Avenue in downtown Seattle, (206) 684-8467.

CODE INTERPRETATION REQUEST
(This form must be accompanied by plans showing the proposal)

Date Requested: _____

Requested By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Relationship to Project:

[ ] Owner   [ ] Design Professional of Record   [ ] Contractor

Project Data:

Project Name/Address: _____

Occupancy Group(s) and Character: _____

Type of Construction: _____   Sprinkler Location: _____

Number of Stories: _____   Number of Basements/Mezzanines: _____

Total Floor Area: _____   Floor Area/Story: _____   Project Floor Area: _____

Interpretation Request:

Description of Code Requirement (include code edition and section and reason for request):

Description of Proposed Interpretation (include code edition and section):

Justification (attach copies of any reference, test reports, expert opinions, etc.):

DPD Decision:

[ ] Accepted   [ ] Accepted with modifications   [ ] Denied
[ ] Draft decision   [ ] Final decision
Reason:

CODE ALTERNATE OR MODIFICATION REQUEST
(This form must be accompanied by plans showing the proposal)

Date Requested: _____

Requested By:
   Name: _____

   Address: _____

   Phone Number: _____

   Relationship to Project:
      [ ] Owner   [ ] Design Professional of Record   [ ] Contractor

Project Data:

   Project Name/Address: _____

   Occupancy Group(s) and Character: _____

   Type of Construction: _____   Sprinkler Location: _____

   Number of Stories: _____   Number of Basements/Mezzanines: _____

   Total Floor Area: _____   Floor Area/Story: _____   Project Floor Area: _____

Alternate/Modification Request:

   Description of Alternate/Modification (include reason for request):

   Description of Code Requirement (include code edition and section):

   Justification (attach copies of any reference, test reports, expert opinions, etc.):

DPD Decision:

[ ] Accepted   [ ] Accepted with modifications   [ ] Denied

[ ] Draft decision   [ ] Final decision
Reason:

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: *This Client Assistance Memo (CAM) should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant is responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described in this CAM.*